

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, JULY 12, 2004

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Bloomfield, Chatterjee, Kirk, Kreider, Senhauser, Sullebarger and Wallace present. Absent: Raser and Spraul-Schmidt

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 400 PIKE STREET, LYTLE PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

Mr. Kreider recused himself since the applicant is a client of his law firm. Staff member Caroline Kellam presented the report for a Certificate of Appropriateness to renovate the office building at 400 Pike Street in the Lytle Park Historic District into 109 residential condominium units with balconies, a new elevator, a penthouse and a rooftop garden.

Ms. Kellam explained that the Lytle Park Historic District is divided into Areas A and B, which have differing degrees of review. The historic guidelines provide that in both areas, any proposed work should be compatible and in harmony with the scale and character of buildings around Lytle Park; review is generally limited to those elevations visible from Lytle Park.

The main (west) façade of 400 Pike Street will not be substantially changed; new windows will be installed replacing the obscure glass from the 1980s. On the upper six floors of the south elevation (facing the Taft Museum) the tripartite windows will be replaced with casement windows, and half of the windows will be removed to create balconies. The rooftop additions including the penthouse and rooftop garden will not be visible from the park.

Christopher Costeines, representing the Taft Museum, had questions regarding the cleaning of the west elevation, the proposed demolition, reconstruction of the balconies on the south elevation, and the project schedule. Mr. Senhauser replied building code and construction related issues were outside of the purview of the Historic Conservation Board, but, he would allow Scott Kyle, the project architect, Doug Hines, the developer, and Doug Putlock to address Mr. Costeines' concerns.

Mr. Hines responded that the Pike Street elevation would be cleaned using removable scaffolding hung off the west elevation of the building. Mr. Hines stated the cleaning method will be environmentally safe, and he will provide information on the type of cleaner to Mr. Costeines. The balcony work is in the interior of the building and they will be removing the windows from the inside. Mr. Kyle was not prepared to discuss the details of the schedule, but stated he intended to try to complete most of the work by this fall.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Bloomfield, second by Sullebarger, Kreider abstaining), to take the following actions:

1. Find that the proposed work including the rooftop additions, the removal of windows and the introduction of balconies on the south elevation will not be a detriment to Lytle Park, the Lytle Park Historic District or its reference buildings.
2. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the adaptive reuse of the building at 400 Pike Street with the condition that any revisions and final plans be reviewed and approved by the Urban Conservator prior to issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness and a building permit.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 2421 AUBURN AVENUE, AUBURN
AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented the staff report regarding application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the renovation of a contributing carriage house or replacing it with a new office building of a similar size. Ms. Cowden first reviewed the conditions under which a non-profit organization such as Cancer Family Care may demolish a building in the Auburn Avenue Historic District. Since the building can be utilized for the office space desired by Cancer Family Care, the applicant provided cost analysis for two proposals:

1. Rehabilitation of the carriage house with an addition or
2. Demolition of the carriage house and the construction of a new building.

Ms. Cowden indicated that the submitted cost analysis showed only a \$20,000 (including contingency) difference between the two proposals, and that rehabilitation of the carriage house with an addition would result in more square footage. Ms. Cowden also stated the proposed designs were incomplete and recommended the Board review the proposals as preliminary designs.

Ms. Margaret Warminski, Preservation Director of the Cincinnati Preservation Association, voiced concern over the amount of demolition along Auburn Avenue since the historic district was established. Ms. Warminski stated her strong preference for the renovation and reuse of the carriage house, and her belief that new construction should not present a false sense of history.

Ms. Kathy Hamm, Cancer Family Care, stated the organization wishes to use the property for offices and as a spa for patients. She said the carriage house is not in usable condition currently. Ms Hamm stated the cost analysis is now out of date and expressed her concern about raising the funds necessary to rehabilitate the building.

Mr. Kreider indicated the cost analysis provided by Cancer Family Care did not demonstrate rehabilitation was not a feasible option. Mr. Kreider acknowledged the difficulties of fund-raising and suggested Cancer Family Care investigate possible financing through historic tax credits and new market tax credits. Mr. Kreider and Ms. Sullebarger suggested the applicant meet with staff to discuss these financing options and to obtain guidance for a more suitable addition to the carriage house.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Sullebarger, second by Kirk) to take the following actions:

1. Deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the carriage house, finding that Cancer Family Care has not demonstrated the building cannot be reused nor can an economic return be gained from the use of all or part of it. Cancer Family Care may resubmit its application for consideration at a later date with more detailed and/or additional cost estimates.
2. Consider Proposal No. 1 as a preliminary design review and offer the applicant any comments or suggestions regarding the preparation of final designs.
3. Deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for Proposal No. 2, as shown in the attached drawings, finding that the design does not meet the Auburn Avenue Historic District Guidelines as proposed.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS & ZONING VARIANCES, 1720 RACE STREET, 114 E. 14TH STREET, 1227 VINE STREET, 217 W. 12TH STREET, 215 E. 14TH STREET & 220 E. CLIFTON AVENUE, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Urban Conservator, William Forwood, presented the staff report for the installation of mosaic freedom murals/signs on six buildings in Over-the-Rhine. Certificates of Appropriateness and zoning variances will be required to install the signs on all six buildings. Each of the six mosaic tile panels will measure 2' x 4' and will be wall mounted. Three of the signs will be installed on non-contributing buildings. All but one of the proposed installations will require zoning variances for additional signs on a single façade. He stated because the mosaics contain text and symbols that relate to the tenants and/or uses of the buildings the Cincinnati Zoning Code defines them as signs. He stated the Over-the-Rhine conservation guidelines stipulate that wall signs be located above the storefront and below the second floor sills. Mr. Forwood suggested the Board view the placement of mosaics more as murals than traditional wall signs.

Mr. Forwood presented photographs of each of the subject buildings, the proposed mosaic design and its placement on the façade.

In response to Mr. Kirk, Mr. Forwood stated there will be two more signs in the series, one on the Vine Street School and the other on the Emanuel Center. Susan Fisher, the artist, added that the mosaics form a freedom trail through Over-the-Rhine, and her client wished the mosaics to be as visible as possible. Ms. Fisher indicated the mosaics are mounted on wonder board. A mastic adhesive will be applied to the wonder board, and the mosaic will then be bolted in place.

Ms. Sullebarger stated her belief that the mosaics represented signs by identifying building tenants. She also expressed her concern about the cumulative visual and physical impact of the mosaics, particularly on the contributing buildings. Ms. Sullebarger stated the mosaics installed on the contributing buildings should meet the guidelines and should be installed in such a way to allow their removal without damaging the buildings. Ms. Fisher indicated the sign at ReSTOC at 114 W. 14th Street will fit in the existing transom. She also stated the mastic can be removed.

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Kreider, second by Chatterjee) to take the following actions:

1. Find that the nature and intent of the proposed tile mosaics requires special consideration as creative works rather than traditional wall signs.

2. Find that as works or art, the mosaics deserve special treatment to allow them to be properly viewed and may be appropriately placed on the façade in locations that may be unacceptable for traditional identification or advertising signage.
3. Find that the proposed mosaics are of a special character that would allow them to be appropriately installed in addition to and on the same wall as a traditional identification or advertising wall sign.
4. Find that granting relief from the literal interpretation of the Cincinnati Zoning Code for the individual address listed below will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or injurious to property in the district or vicinity where the property is located and
 - a. Is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the district.
5. Approve a zoning variance for the OTR Older Adult Center, 1720 Race Street, for the installation of a third wall sign on the Race Street façade and for the total area of signage on the that façade. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed mosaic and its location on the first floor level.
6. Approve a zoning variance for the Peaslee Neighborhood Center, 215 E. 14th Street, for the installation of a second wall sign on the 14th Street façade. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed mosaic and its location on the first floor level.
7. Approve a zoning variance for the Contact Center, 1227 Vine Street, for the installation of a second wall sign on the 14th Street façade. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed mosaic and its location under the storefront window on the condition that the mosaic be installed in a way that's reversible.
8. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed mosaic for the Drop-Inn Center, 217 W. 12th Street and its location above the 12th Street entry doors.
9. Approve a zoning variance for the ReSTOC offices, 114 W. 14th Street, for the installation of a second wall sign on the 14th Street façade. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed mosaic on the condition that the mosaic be installed in a way that's reversible, it be reduced in size so as to be mounted in the transom above the entry doors without modification to the dimensions of the opening and without obscuring significant architectural details.
10. Approve a zoning variance for the OTR Housing Network offices, 220 E. Clifton Avenue, for the installation of a second wall sign on the Clifton Street façade. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed mosaic as shown in Plan B and on the condition that the mosaic be installed in a way that's reversible.

EASTWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT, NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented the staff report for the proposed Eastwood Historic District in Madisonville. She explained that as a Certified Local Government, the City of Cincinnati has been asked to comment on the nomination. The Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board will consider the nomination at its meeting on August 6, 2004.

Ms. Cowden indicated that under Criterion C, properties may be eligible for the National Register if they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. While the Eastwood Historic District may indeed represent a “significant early and mid-20th century, middle-class residential subdivision,” the nomination fails to present strong documentation or a compelling argument to support this conclusion.

Ms. Cowden said that additional justification and documentation must be submitted before staff and the Historic Conservation Board can fully assess this resource. Staff discussed its concerns with Ms. Vanoy on Tuesday, July 6, 2004; she is aware staff will be recommending further research and documentation be undertaken.

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Chatterjee, second by Sullebarger) to take the following actions:

1. Find that further documentation and revisions to the Registration Form are necessary before the proposed Eastwood Historic District can be evaluated under Criterion C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
2. Direct staff to forward the Board's findings regarding this nomination to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office prior to the August 6, 2004 meeting of the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser, Chairman

Date: _____